The Father's Promiſe to the Son, a clear Bow in the Church's darkeſt Cloud;

OR,

The ſpiritual Seed of Chriſt preſerved in all Ages and amidſt all Dangers.

Being the Subſtance of ſeveral

SERMONS

Preached at *Perth*, in the Years 1729. and 1730.

By the late REVEREND *and* LEARNED *Mr.* WILLIAM WILSON *Miniſter of the Goſpel at* PERTH.

2 Sam. iii. 38. *There is —— a great Man fallen in* Iſrael.

Heb. xi. 14. *He being dead yet ſpeaketh.*

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Diſcourſes were lately found in the Author's Cloſet in Manuſcript, corrected with his own Hand; an inconteſtible Evidence that he deſigned the Publication of the ſame. So we judge it our Duty to do him the Juſtice, and the World the Service of preſenting them with this Part of his Works, whoſe Fame is in the Church; and ſince a few Sermons are all that Part of this Author's Works the World can be favoured with, it is therefore expected that well-diſpoſed People will be careful to peruſe, and recommend the Peruſal of the ſame where they can have Influence, which, thro' the Lord's Bleſſing, will terminate in their Profit.

Psalm lxxxix. 29.

His Seed alſo will I make to endure for ever.

THIS excellent *Pſalm* was penned by *Ethan* the *Ezrahite*, as the Inſcription bears; it is probable he is the ſame *Ethan* who was famous in the Days of *Solomon* for Wiſdom, together with his Brethren *Heman*, *Chalchol* and *Darda* the Sons of *Macho*, 1 *Kings* iv. 31. It is remarkable, that, in the preceeding *Pſalm*, his Brother *Heman* is under much of a Spirit of Bondage; he cries out, that his Soul is full of Troubles, that the Wrath of the Lord lieth hard upon him, that he is in Darkneſs and in the Deeps, and that he is ready to die from his Youth, and diſtracted with the Terrors of the Lord: But in this Pſalm *Ethan* ſings of the Mercy and Faithfulneſs of God. O what adorable Sovereignty is here! Some of the Saints and People of God walk, for the moſt Part of their Time, in Darkneſs and under much Heavineſs and Bondage, while others enjoy a more pleaſant Sun-Shine of ſpiritual Light, Joy and Comfort: So it is with *Ethan* in this *Pſalm*; tho' in the Cloſe of it he bewails the Calamity and Diſtreſs that the Church and People of God, in his Day, were brought under, yet he is comforted and encouraged, and his Faith is ſtrengthned and confirmed, from the ſpiritual Diſcoveries that are given him of that rare Superſtructure of Mercy on the Behalf of miſerable Sinners,

and

and alſo of the ſolemn Engagement of divine Faithfulneſs for the Preſervation of Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed, according to the Covenant-Tranſaction with the Lord Jeſus, of whom *David* was an eminent Type; and therefore, from the Beginning to the 15th Verſe of the *Pſalm*, he celebrates, with a Song of Praiſe, the Mercy and Faithfulneſs, the Sovereignty, Greatneſs and Power of God manifeſted in all his Diſpenſations towards his Church and People. And, from the 15th to the 19th Verſe, we have ſome of the ſpecial Characters, with the peculiar Bleſſings of all ſuch who are Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed, and Heirs of the Promiſe; from the 19th Verſe and downward, the new Covenant-Tranſaction is farther laid open in ſome Account of the wonderful Perſon who has the firſt Room and Place in this excellent Bargain, and who bears all the Weight and Burden of the whole Building of Mercy; as alſo of his Furniture for his Work, and his glorious Succeſs in it: Who is he then on whom the Help of ſelf-deſtroying *Iſrael* is laid? He is *David Jehovah*'s Servant, 20th Verſe. Surely a greater than *David* the King of *Judah* and *Iſrael* is here, for he is one that is mighty, 19th Verſe. He is indeed the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, who is able to ſave unto the uttermoſt all that come unto God through him; he is alſo one choſen out of the People, he is God in our Nature, or *Immanuel*, God with us. This is he with whom the Covenant of Grace ſtands faſt, 28th Verſe. He is deſigned the Firſt-born, 27th Verſe. *I will make him my Firſt-born.* And ſo, *Rom.* viii. 29. he is called the Firſt-born among many Brethren; and, *Col.* i. 15, 18. *The Firſt-born of every Creature, and the Firſt-born from the Dead, that in all Things he might have the Pre-*

eminence.

eminence. The Right of the First-born is in the Person of the Lord Jesus the second *Adam*; he the Head of the new Covenant, the glorious Heir of all Things, and unto him all the Promises of Grace and Glory are given in the first Instance, and in him they are made sure unto all his spiritual Seed. With respect unto his Furniture for his Work he was anointed with the Oyl of Holiness, that is, with the holy Spirit in a super-abundant Measure, whereby he was furnished and strengthned for the Discharge of the great Work and Trust committed unto him in the 20th and 21st Verses. And as for his Success in his Work, he hath trampled under Foot the strong Powers of Darkness, Sin and *Satan*, the World, Death, Hell and the Grave, 22d and 23d Verses. And being now exalted into the Throne of his Glory, he stretcheth out his omnipotent Arm in the Dispensation of the Word of the Gospel, the Rod of his Strength, by which he makes a Conquest of Grace in the Islands of the Sea, and also in the Continent amongst the Rivers, 25th Verse. And unto him it is promised, in the Words of our Text, that his Seed shall endure for ever, that is, he shall have a spiritual Seed and Offspring upon this Earth as long as the Sun and Moon do endure. *His Seed I will make to endure.* Whatever Opposition may be made by Men or Devils unto Christ's Cause and People, yet that Day shall never dawn wherein it can be said that Christ's spiritual Seed do altogether fail; nay, in all Ages and Generations he shall have a Seed to do him Service, a People to honour him, and Subjects to yield Obedience unto him, for his Throne shall be as the Days of Heaven. The doctrinal Proposition I lay before you is almost in the Words of the Text, *namely, That Christ's spiritual Seed*

shall

ſhall endure for ever. The ſame Thing is promiſed in the 4th and 36th Verſes of the *Pſalm*, and the Promiſe is ratified and confirmed by the Oath of God, in the 3d and 4th Verſes. *I have ſworn unto* David *my Servant, thy Seed will I eſtabliſh for ever.* And in the 35th and 36th Verſes, *Once have I ſworn by my Holineſs, that I will not lie unto* David; *His Seed ſhall endure for ever.* The frequent Repetition of this Promiſe, and with ſuch a Solemnity, ſhews us of what Importance and Weight this Subject is; and truly it is of great Uſe, to ſupport and confirm the Faith of Believers in Chriſt under all ſhaking and trying Diſpenſations of divine Providence towards the Church and People of God, and particularly under the ſad Thoughts of Heart that we may have from the low State and Condition of the Churches of Chriſt at this Day. It is alſo very uſeful to quicken and encourage us to our Duty, therefore I ſhall inſiſt a little upon it; and, in diſcourſing it, I ſhall endeavour, *firſt*, to ſhew you whom we are to underſtand by Chriſt's Seed. *2dly.* Why they are called his Seed. *3dly.* How or by what Means they have been preſerved in all Ages and Generations. *4thly.* I ſhall lay before you ſome few Conſiderations for confirming you in the Faith of this important Truth. *5thly.* I ſhall ſhew you why it is that Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed muſt endure for ever. And, in the *laſt* Place, I ſhall make ſome practical Uſe and Improvement of this Subject.

The firſt Thing propoſed is, to ſhew who are meant by Chriſt's Seed.

Firſt, All that are ordained unto eternal Life are Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed; there is a Remnant, according unto the Election of Grace, even a goodly Number of the apoſtate and loſt Race of Mankind,

Mankind, who were choſen unto eternal Life before the Foundations of the World were laid, *Rom.* viii. 29. *Eph.* i. 4. All thoſe are Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed; they are his Seed in the Purpoſe and in the Decree of God; they are his Seed by the Father's Gift and Grant unto him; they are the Men who were given unto Chriſt out of the World, *John* xvii. 6. They are his Seed in reſpect of his Undertaking for them: he undertook from all Eternity to pay the Price of their Redemption from Sin and Wrath, and to bring in a Law-biding Righteouſneſs for their Juſtification. As all the Poſterity of the firſt *Adam* were in him, as their common Head and Repreſentatives, when the Covenant of Works was tranſacted with him, ſo all the Elect was in Chriſt the ſecond *Adam*, as their common Head and Repreſentative, when God tranſacted with him; and, in this eternal Tranſaction, not only was all needful Furniture promiſed unto the Redeemer, to enable him to diſcharge the Work and Truſt undertaken by him, but alſo the Promiſe of Life, forfeited by the Apoſtaſy of the firſt *Adam*, is given unto him as the ſecond *Adam*, the Head of the new Family, and the Heir of all Things. Hence, *Tit.* i. 2. it is ſaid, *In Hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie promiſed before the World began.* Yea, all the Grace deſigned for the Veſſels of Mercy in Time, is laid up in the ſecond *Adam* as the common Treaſury and Store-Houſe: *For in him are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. And it is *of his Fulneſs that we receive, and Grace for Grace*, John i. 16. And all the Grace wherewith the Veſſels of Mercy are filled in Time, is given them in Chriſt Jeſus before the World began, 2 *Tim.* i. 9. All this is very well expreſſed

preſſed, in a very few Words, in the Anſwer to that Queſtion in our larger Catechiſm, *With whom was the Covenant of Grace made?* The Anſwer is, *The Covenant of Grace was made with Chriſt as the ſecond* Adam, *and in him with all the Elect as his Seed.* Gal. iii. 16. Rom. v. 15.

Secondly, All who are effectually called are Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed. The Elect, in effectual Calling, are united unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and are made joint Heirs with him unto the Promiſes, *Gal.* iii. 29. And, if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye *Abraham's* Seed, and Heirs according unto the Promiſe: It is in their effectual Calling that the Elect obtain an actual Intereſt in the Promiſes. For clearing this Matter a little, you may obſerve, that tho' all the Poſterity of the firſt *Adam* were in him as their common Head and Repreſentative, when he ſinned and fell, yet they have no actual Communion with him in his Sin, till once they have a Being in him by natural Generation; then it is that his Sin is imputed unto them, and then it is that they derive a corrupted and depraved Nature from him, *Rom.* v. 12, 14, 15, 16. Even ſo, tho' all the Elect were virtually in the ſecond *Adam* as their Head and Repreſentative, yet they have not actual Communion with him in his Grace, till the Day of their myſtical Union with him, when they are apprehended by the Spirit, ſent down from the living and Life-giving Head, and are enabled by a lively Faith to apprehend him; then it is that his Righteouſneſs is imputed unto them, and the Promiſe of eternal Life does then become theirs in their own Perſons. In a Word, then it is that they receive the Remiſſion of Sins, *and an Inheritance among them which are ſanctified by Faith that is in him*, Acts xxvi. 18. It is of the E-

lect

lect converted, or of ſuch who truly believe in the Lord Jeſus, that I underſtand the Promiſe in in our Text. *His Seed alſo will I make to endure for ever*; that is, ſuch as really believe in him ſhall never altogether fail from off the Earth; he ſhall have ſome ſuch in all Ages and Generations upon the Earth.

I proceed to the *ſecond* Thing propoſed, *namely*, To ſhew you why Believers in Chriſt are called his Seed.

Firſt, They all ſpring from him; they are his genuine Iſſue and Offspring, *Iſa.* xxii. 24. *And they ſhall hang upon him all the Glory of his Father's Houſe, the Offspring and the Iſſue.* They ſpring from the Sufferings and Death of Chriſt, *Iſa.* liii. 10. *When thou ſhalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he ſhall ſee his Seed.* They are the Travail of Chriſt's Soul, *Iſa.* liii. 11. *In his State of Humiliation he travailed to bring forth many Children to God.* They ſpring from his Reſurrection from the Dead, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. *He hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead.* They ſpring from the Covenant-Tranſaction with him; this glorious Bargain is laid open in the Word and Promiſes of the Goſpel, and by the Word of Truth they are begotten unto him, *James* i. 18. *Of his own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth.* They are born of the incorruptible Seed of the Word, 1 *Pet.* i. 23. They are brought forth and nouriſhed by the Means of the Word of Promiſe; therefore they are called the Children of Promiſe, *Gal.* iv. 28. They all deſcend from him as their Father, and are born of his Spirit, *John* iii. 5, 6.

2*dly*. Believers in Chriſt are called his Seed, becauſe they have all their ſpiritual Being from

 him;

him : As Children have their natural Being from their Parents, ſo Believers have a ſpiritual Being from Chriſt ; whatever they have as they are Believers, they have it from him : They have all their ſpiritual Life from him, for he quickens them when they are dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, *Eph.* ii. 1, 4, 5. They have that Faith, from which they are denominated Believers, from him, for it is the Faith of his Operation, *Col.* ii. 12. They have that Righteouſneſs, whereby they are juſtified in the Sight of God, only from him, *Iſa.* liv. 17. *Their Righteouſneſs is of me, ſaith the Lord.* Alſo they have all their Sanctification from him ; for he is made of God unto them Sanctification, 1 *Cor.* i. 30. In a Word, they have all Grace and Glory from him, *for he giveth both Grace and Glory*, Pſalm lxxxiv. 11.

3*dly*. Believers in Chriſt are called his Seed, becauſe of that Reſemblance that they bear unto the Lord Jeſus ; as Children reſemble their Parents, ſo all Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed reſemble himſelf. 1*ſt*. They reſemble him in the new Nature that is given unto him ; as Children have the ſame Nature with their Parents, ſo Believers in Chriſt are Partakers in the divine Nature, 2 *Pet.* i. 4. The divine Nature, in which they are ſaid to partake, is their Renovation in the Spirit of their Minds, or the new Man, *which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*, Eph. iv. 23, 24. 2*dly*. They reſemble Chriſt in the Spirit that is given unto them ; the ſame Spirit that is in Chriſt, is alſo given unto every Believer. The Holy Ghoſt was indeed given to him above Meaſure, but he is given unto every one of them according to their Meaſure, yet he is the ſame Spirit both in the Head and in all the Members of

the

the myſtical Body. The Holy Ghoſt did reſt upon the Head, as a Spirit of Wiſdom and Knowledge, and he is given unto all his Members, as the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Chriſt, *Iſa.* xi. 2. *Eph.* i. 17. The holy Spirit did reſt upon Chriſt as the Spirit of Might, and all his ſpiritual Seed are ſtrengthned with Might by his Spirit in the inner Man, *Eph.* iii. 16. The Spirit deſcended upon the Head as the Spirit of Holineſs, and he is given unto every one that believes as the Spirit of Sanctification, 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. The Spirit did likeways reſt upon the Head as a Spirit of Supplications, for in the Days of his Fleſh he offered up Prayers and Supplications with ſtrong Crying and Tears, *Heb.* v. 7. and he is promiſed and given as the Spirit of Grace and Supplication unto all his ſpiritual Seed, *Zech.* xii. 10. He is in them the Spirit of Adoption *whereby they cry Abba, Father*, Rom. viii. 15. *3dly.* Believers in Chriſt reſemble him in their Graces, ſuch as Faith, Love, Zeal, and the like. The Head and Captain of Salvation was eminent for his Faith and Truſt in God, *Heb.* ii. 13. for Love to and Zeal for his Father's Honour and Glory; *The Zeal of thy Houſe did eat me up.* Likeways for his Humility and Meekneſs, *Matth.* xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart;* and all Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed bear ſome Reſemblance and Likeneſs to him in theſe; they are a People that put their Truſt in the Lord, *Pſalm* ix. 10. It is a Character of them, that they love him, 1 *Pet.* i. 8. they are the Meek of the Earth, *Pſalm* xxv. 9.

4thly. Believers in Chriſt are called his Seed becauſe of his tender Care and Concern about them. As Parents are naturally careful of their Children, ſo the Lord Chriſt has the Heart of a

Father

Father towards his People, and the Care and Concern of a Father for them. *1ſt.* He loveth them as a Father loveth his Children. The Love of a Parent to his Children is a tender Love, a great Love, a compaſſionate and ſympathizing Love; ſo is the Love of Chriſt unto his People: He loveth them with a tender Love. As the affectionate Parent carries the little Child in his Arms, and lays it in his Boſom, ſo it is ſaid of Chriſt, that *he gathereth his Lambs with his Arm, and carries them in his Boſom*, Iſa. xl. 11. Likeways the Love of Chriſt unto his People is a very great Love. Parents will readily expoſe themſelves to very great Dangers for the Sake of their Children; but the Love of Chriſt excels in Greatneſs; he expoſed himſelf to the greateſt of all Dangers, for the Sake of all his ſpiritual Seed, even to the Wrath of a Sin-revenging God, and to Death armed with its direful Sting, *Eph.* v. 2. *Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and given himſelf for us.* Alſo the Love of Chriſt unto his People is a compaſſionate and ſympathizing Love, *Pſalm* ciii. 13. *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* Who can expreſs the Pity, Sympathy, the Yearnings of Bowels that are in a tender-hearted Parent towards his Child, eſpecially in its Affliction and Diſtreſs? Yet this is but a faint Emblem and Shadow of that Pity and Sympathy that is with the Lord Jeſus towards his People, ſuch as a Sympathy with them, that *in all their Afflictions he is afflicted*, Iſa. lxiii. 19. and whoever toucheth them, toucheth him in the moſt tender and ſenſible Part, *Zech.* ii. 8. *For he that toûcheth you, toucheth the Apple of his Eye.*

2dly. Parents are careful to provide for their Children, even ſo Chriſt has made a liberal and

and large Proviſion for all his ſpiritual Seed, he hath provided a goodly Heritage for them, even the Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, and unto the Hope of this Inheritance they are begotten, 1 *Pet.* i. 3, 4. He has made Proviſion of all ſpiritual Bleſſings for them, he will give them both Grace and Glory, *Pſalm* lxxxiv. 11. and whatever temporal Bleſſings are needful for them, theſe are provided in the Covenant likeways, *Iſa.* xxxiii. 16. *Their Bread ſhall be given them, and their Water ſhall be ſure.* *3dly.* He corrects them as a Father doth his Children, the Duty of a Parent is carefully to correct the Child when the Rod is needful; and when the Lord ſees the Rod to be needful for his Children, he will not ſpare it, *Rev.* iii. 19. *As many as I love I rebuke and chaſten,* Heb. xii. 8. *If ye be without Chaſtiſement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Baſtards, and not Sons.* And in the Verſes following our Text, 30, 31, 32. *If his Children forſake my Law———Then will I viſit their Tranſgreſſions with the Rod.*

5thly. Believers in Chriſt are called his Seed, becauſe in him they have a Right and Title unto all Things. All are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, 1 *Cor.* iii. 22. The Head of the Family, as we have obſerved already, is the Heir of all Things, *Heb.* i. 2. and all Children of the Family are joint Heirs with him, *Rom.* viii. 17. All the Promiſes are given unto Chriſt in the firſt Inſtance, *Gal.* iii. 16. *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the Promiſes made. He ſaith not, and to Seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Chriſt.* And in him all the Promiſes of Grace and Glory are *Yea,* and *Amen,* unto all his ſpiritual Seed. The Head of the Family has the firſt Right and

Title

Title to plead the Covenant-Relation. In the 26th Verſe of this *Pſalm*, *He ſhall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, thou art my God, and the Rock of my Salvation*: And it is in him, even under the Shadow of his Wings, that all the Children of the Family may with the Boldneſs of Faith cry unto him, *Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation.* It is in him that they may plead the Relation; therefore he ſays, *John* xx. 17. *I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* Chriſt the Head of the Family has the firſt Right and Title to the Kingdom, to the Glory, and to the Throne; and in him all his ſpiritual Seed have a Right and Title unto the Kingdom, *I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*; yea, in him they have a Right and Title unto his Glory, and unto his Throne, *John* xvii. 22. *And the Glory which thou gaveſt me I have given them*, Rev. iii. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me on my Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father on his Throne.*

I proceed to the third Thing propoſed, *namely*, To ſhew you, how or by what Means Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved in all Ages and Generations.

I anſwer, 1*ſt*. By the Miniſtry of the Word.

2*dly*. By the Concurrence of the Spirit of God with the Word.

3*dly*. By the Church's wreſtling with God in Prayer.

4*thly*. By the Word of their Teſtimony. And,

5*thly*. By remarkable Appearances of the Lord amongſt them and for them.

I ſhall upon each of theſe Heads give you ſome particular

particular Inſtances with reference to the Lord's Church and People in this Land.

In the *firſt* Place, Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved in all Ages by the Miniſtry of the Word. This is the great outward Mean that the Lord hath made Uſe, and doth ſtill make Uſe of for bringing forth a Seed unto himſelf; it is the Rod of his Strength, by which his People are made willing in the Day of his Power, *Pſalm* cx. 2, 3. The Word of the Goſpel was firſt preached in Paradiſe by the Angel of the Covenant, to our firſt Parents immediately after their diſmal Apoſtaſy in that Promiſe, *Gen.* iii. 15. *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed*, &c. We have no Ground to doubt of the Succeſs of this Preaching, and from it we may date the bringing forth of a ſpiritual Offspring unto the Lord Jeſus, which have continued ever ſince, and will continue to the End of Time. The ſame Word of the Goſpel was preached unto *Abraham*, *Gal.* iii. 8. compared with *Gen.* xiii. 3. And it was believed by him, *Rom.* iv. 3. Abraham *believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteouſneſs*. This Word was given by the Lord to the whole Church of *Iſrael*, and great was the Company of thoſe that publiſhed it, *Pſalm* lxviii. 11. The Apoſtles were alſo commanded to preach the Word of the Goſpel, firſt at *Jeruſalem*, and then among the Nations, *Luke* xxiv. 47. The preaching of the Goſpel was the great Mean by which the Kingdom of *Pagan* Darkneſs was firſt ſhaken, and afterwards gradually deſtroyed, throughout the *Roman* Empire; even in the *Apoſtolick* Age, *their Sound went unto all the Earth, and their Words to the Ends of the World*, Rom. x. 18. The Sound of the Goſpel went at

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that Time, not only through the *Roman* Empire, but alſo to theſe Places of the Earth into which the *Roman* Arms had not then penetrated: And it is very probable, that our barbarous Foreſathers in *Scotland* were early enlightned by the Word of the Goſpel, if not in the Apoſtolick Age, yet in the Beginning of the next. Thus, as the Walls of *Jericho* did fall before the Blowing of Rams Horns, ſo was *Pagan* Idolatry deſtroyed by the Blowing of the great Trumpet of the Goſpel. Again, when groſs Antichriſtian Darkneſs had covered the Chriſtian World, it pleaſed the Lord, by the pure Preaching of the Word of the Goſpel, to ſhake the Kingdom of Antichriſt. By this glorious Mean, whole Nations and Provinces were brought off from their blind Subjection to Antichriſt; and, amongſt others, *Scotland*, being covered with Popiſh Darkneſs, was, in the Century preceeding the laſt, again illuminated by the Miniſtry of a *Hamilton*, *Wiſhart* and *Knox*; who may be juſtly reckoned amongſt the firſt three; and, by their Miniſtry, a numerous Seed was brought forth to the Lord Jeſus, which have been preſerved in *Scotland* by the preaching of the Word, even when the Church of Chriſt in this Land has been brought very low. As for Inſtance, in the late cruel perſecuting Days, it was by a preached Goſpel in Corners and in the Deſarts, that a ſpiritual Seed were preſerved unto the Lord Jeſus.

2*dly*. Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have endured in all Ages by the Concurrence of the Holy Spirit with the Word: The Word is only a Mean, it has no Efficacy of itſelf, all the Efficacy depends upon the Energy of the Holy Ghoſt; it is through the Power of the Spirit, accompanying the Word, that it has done ſuch great Things upon the Earth.

Earth. The Word in the Hand of the Spirit of God has prevailed over the ſtrong Powers of Darkneſs, it has overcome Nations and Provinces, and brought many of Chriſt's Enemies unto a profeſſed outward Subjection, and others unto a real and cordial Subjection unto him. *The Arrows of the Word, when directed by the Spirit of God, is ſharp in the Hearts of the King's Enemies*, Pſalm xlv. 5. The Old Teſtament Believers had the Spirit of Faith given unto them, and the ſame Spirit of Faith is given under the New Teſtament Diſpenſation, 1 *Cor.* iv. 13. only, under the New Teſtament Diſpenſation, there is a more plentiful and more extenſive Effuſion of the Holy Spirit; the Succeſs that the Goſpel had in the Apoſtles Days, and alſo in our reforming Days, was wholly owing to the Concurrence of the Spirit with the Word; and by this Means Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved to this very Day, according to that Promiſe, *Iſa.* lix. 21. *My Spirit that is upon thee, and my Words that I have put in thy Mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed's Seed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* I might here condeſcend upon ſome particular Inſtances of a more than ordinary Down-pouring of the Spirit accompanying the Word, but I will have Occaſion to mention theſe afterwards.

3*dly*, The Lord Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved by wreſtling with God in Prayer; this is a Mean the Church and People of God have tried with good Succeſs, when they have been brought very low; and frequently, when the Lord is about to give any great Deliverance to his Church and People, he pours out a Spirit of Prayer: When the Children of *Iſrael* were ſighing

under their Bondage in *Egypt*, they cried unto the Lord, and their Cry came up unto him, and he heard their Groaning, and remembred his Covenant, *Exod.* ii. 23, 24. When the Church was in great Danger in *Eſther*'s Days, ſhe faſted and prayed, and appointed *Mordecai* and the reſt of the *Jews* at *Shuſhan* to do ſo, *Eſther* iv. 15, 16. and the Lord anſwered their Prayers, by giving them a wonderful Deliverance: Likeways the Members of the infant primitive Church, *Acts* i. 14. were all with one Accord in Prayer and Supplication, before that remarkable Down-pouring of the Spirit on the Day of *Pentecoſte*. We have had a great Company of Miniſters and Chriſtians in *Scotland* who have had Power with God, and have prevailed in Prayer; their Prayers have ſometimes been a Terror to their very Enemies. When Queen *Mary* heard of Mr. *Knox* and the Congregation their Faſting and Praying, ſhe declared ſhe was more afraid of their Prayers than of ten thouſand Men in Arms: And the Hiſtory bears, that the Lord gave a remarkable Return to their Prayer. Amongſt many others that might be named, Mr. *Wiſhart*, one of the firſt three, after more than ordinary Nearneſs to God in Prayer, expreſſed himſelf in this Manner: 'This Realm 'ſhall be illuminated with the Light of Chriſt's Go'ſpel, as clearly as ever any Realm ſince the Days 'of the Apoſtles; the Houſe of God ſhall be buil'ded in it, yea, it ſhall not lack, (ſaid he) till that 'the Glory of God ſhall evidently appear, and ſhall 'once triumph in Deſpite of *Satan*: But, alas! if 'the People ſhall be after unthankful, then fearful 'and terrible ſhall be the Plagues that ſhall fol'low'. Famous Mr. *Welſh*, who ordinarily ſpent eight Hours of the four and twenty in Prayer, was overheard expreſſing himſelf after this Manner:

ner: O Lord, wilt thou not give me *Scotland!* And he lived and died in the Faith of it, that the Lord would preſerve a Remnant in *Scotland.* Likeways great Mr. *Robert Bruce*, after ſome Time ſpent in Faſting and Prayer for the Church of Chriſt in *Scotland*, at that Time groaning under Prelatick Tyranny and Oppreſſion, expreſſed his Hopes of that glorious Deliverance which was afterwards given unto this Church in the Year 1638. But particular Inſtances of this Nature are ſo many, that I muſt ſtop, and not launch forth into them: I ſhall only obſerve, upon this Head, that the Wreſtlers in Prayer for the Church of Chriſt in this Land, have found Footing for Faith and Hope in that Promiſe, *Pſalm* ii. 8. *I will give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the utmoſt Ends of the Earth for thy Poſſeſſion.*

4*thly.* Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved by the Word of their Teſtimony. This is another notable Mean by which a Seed have endured to the Lord in all Ages and Generations. By this Mean they were preſerved, under hot Perſecution, from *Rome Pagan* and *Antichriſtian.* Hence, *Rev.* xii. 11. it is ſaid, *They overcame by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their Teſtimony*; they did bear Witneſs to the Truth in Face of the greateſt Oppoſition. They did confeſs and own the Truths of Chriſt, when theſe were either openly born down by violent Perſecutors, or ſecretly undermined by cunning Seducers, and, in doing ſo, they did prevail and overcome; and truly this is a ſpecial Mean by which the Truths of Chriſt have been tranſmitted in their Purity from one Generation to another. I ſhall notice three Ways by which the Word of the Church's Teſtimony has been given, particularly in *Scotland.* In the *firſt* Place,

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by publick Confeſſions. Theſe have been, and are the Church's Teſtimony unto the Truths of Chriſt againſt riſing and prevailing Errors; they are publick Declarations to the World, what Things are received and believed by the Church as the Truths of God agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, the only infallible Rule of Faith, and what is rejected by the Church as contrary thereunto, or of what the Church believes to be Truth, and condemns as Errors. Our Confeſſions of Faith in the Church of *Scotland* have been bleſſed Means for preſerving Purity, Harmony and Unity in the Faith amongſt us: Our firſt Confeſſion of Faith is that which was received and approven by this Church in the Year 1560. and it contains this Church's Teſtimony unto the Truths of Chriſt, given in a ſpecial Manner in Oppoſition to the Errors of the Church of *Rome*. Our laſt Confeſſion of Faith, compiled by that learned and grave Aſſembly at *Weſtminſter*, and received by this Church *anno* 1647. is in many Things more full than our firſt, and contains the Words of this Church's Teſtimony to the Truths of Chriſt, both in Oppoſition to the Errors of Popery, and alſo unto many other Errors that had ſprung up in the Church ſince the Reformation. Our national Covenant doth alſo bear the Title of the Confeſſion of Faith of all Ranks in *Scotland*; and truly our national Covenants were a more ſolemn avouching of the Truth, and particularly of thoſe that were then moſt oppoſed, and a more ſolemn engaging againſt Sin and Errors that the Church was then moſt in Danger of. All Confeſſions of Faith are now cried down by ſome in this Age, as an Impoſition upon the Conſciences of Men, and as an Incroachment upon our Chriſtian Liberty; but

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that Liberty which thoſe Men would have, it is a Liberty to vent and propagate Error and Hereſy, to the Diſhonour of God, and the Ruining of the Souls of others. Our national Covenants are undervalued and deſpiſed by others, not only by a Set of Men who have, ever ſince the Reformation, declared their Enmity at the Work of God in this Land, I mean the Popiſh and Prelatick Party; but there are ſome lately ſprung up amongſt us, who, pretending to more Strictneſs, cry down all national Covenanting, as not warranted under the New Teſtament Diſpenſation; but, as national Covenanting was no Part of *the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances*, (which is now indeed abrogated by the Coming of Chriſt in the Fleſh) ſo it has been a bleſſed Mean in the Hand of the Lord, for preſerving and tranſmitting to us the Doctrine, Worſhip, Government, and Diſcipline of the Lord's Houſe, pure and free from antichriſtian Errors and Superſtition. 2*dly*. The Word of the Church's Teſtimony is given by her Office-Bearers, particularly her Miniſters in the preaching of the Word. The faithful Miniſters of the Church do, in their publick Preachings, bear Teſtimony unto Truth, and againſt the Errors and Evils of their Day and Time. This Church has been bleſſed with a great Cloud of ſuch Witneſſes, who have preached down every Thing contrary unto the covenanted Doctrine, Worſhip, and Government of Chriſt's Houſe in this Land; and they have overcome by *the Word of their Teſtimony*: And if we are enabled to uſe this Mean honeſtly and faithfully, we have Ground to hope we ſhall overcome the riſing and prevailing Evils of our Day and Time. 3*dly*. The Word of the Church's Teſtimony is given, by owning and confeſſing the Truths in Face of the greateſt

greateſt Danger. Chriſt has had, in all Ages, his Witneſſes, who have *not loved their Lives unto Death*, who have *reſiſted unto Blood, ſtriving againſt Sin*, and his ſpiritual Seed have been rather increaſed than diminiſhed by all the ſad Sufferings they have been expoſed unto; as it was with *Iſrael* in *Egypt*, ſo it has been with them in all Ages, *the more they were afflicted the more they grew:* The Church's ſuffering Times have been her moſt thriving Times. The Church of *Scotland* has likeways given her Teſtimony unto the Truths of Chriſt, by ſore and ſharp Sufferings, before the Reformation was eſtabliſhed; the Word of her Teſtimony was given and ſealed by the Blood of ſeveral againſt the Idolatry and Tyranny of the Church of *Rome*; and, ſince the Reformation, the Word of her Teſtimony has been ſtated for the Royal Power and Authority of the Lord Jeſus in his own Houſe, and for that Government which he hath appointed in it: Theſe two Points are a notable Branch of the covenanted Teſtimony of the Church of *Scotland*, to which a great Number have born Witneſs *even unto Death*, particularly in the late perſecuting Times, and *they overcame by the Blood of the Lamb, and the Word of their Teſtimony.*

5thly. Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved by remarkable Appearances of the Lord amongſt them. To ſpeak of the great Appearances of God in Behalf of his Church is a large Subject. I ſhall confine myſelf to few particular Heads, and give ſome particular Inſtances under each of them. In the

Firſt Place, The Lord has appeared in his Church by raiſing up eminent Inſtruments, fitted and qualified for diſcharging the Duties they were called to, and encountring the Difficulties that were in their Way:

Way: Thus *Moſes* and *Aaron* were raiſed up to be the Inſtruments of the Church's Deliverance from the Oppreſſion and Bondage they were under in *Egypt*; likeways, when the Church and People of God were in Captivity in *Babylon*, the Lord ſtirred up the Spirit of *Cyrus* King of *Perſia* to give Liberty to the captive *Jews* to return, and raiſed up *Zerubbabel* and others to bring them back from *Babylon*, Ezek. i. 5. and ii. 2. Alſo the Apoſtles were indued with *Power from on high* for preaching the Goſpel, and laying the Foundation of the New Teſtament. In like Manner, when the Lord was about to bring his Church and People of *Scotland* out of antichriſtian Bondage and Darkneſs, he raiſed up his *Zerubbabels*, who laid the Foundation of a glorious Work of Reformation. The firſt three that I have already named were eminently fitted for the Duties and Difficulties of their Day; the Lord alſo ſtirred up the Spirits of ſome of the firſt Rank in the Land to put to their Hands to his own Work; and as in that Period, ſo in after Periods ſince that Time, he has raiſed up Inſtruments fitted for the Dangers and Difficulties in which the Church has been.

2*dly*. The Lord has appeared amongſt his Church and People, by pouring down his Spirit in a remarkable Way and Manner. The Spirit of the Lord was promiſed to the Children of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, at their Return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. *Jer.* l. 4, 5. *The Children of* Iſrael *ſhall come, they and the Children of* Judah *together, going and weeping, — ſaying, Come, and let us join ourſelves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that ſhall not be forgotten.* Likeways, on the Day of Pentecoſte, *Acts* ii. the Holy Ghoſt was poured down in an extraordinary Manner, and 3000 were born at once

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in *Zion*, by such remarkable Showers of the Spirit a spiritual Seed have been brought forth, and preserved to the Lord Jesus. I shall upon this Head confine myself to a few particular Instances of this Kind in the Church of *Scotland*.

1*st*. At the Beginning of the Reformation, the Word of the Gospel had such wonderful Success, that, in a short Time, the whole Body of the Nation made a professed Subjection unto the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1560. the first Confession of Faith was approven in Parliament, and the Pope's Authority in *Scotland* was abolished, when a very few Years before that antichristian Darkness was over the whole Land. Such marvellous Success had the Word of the Gospel, that it might be said a whole Nation was born at once. That Prophecy was remarkably accomplished in *Scotland*, Isa. lxvi. 8. *Who hath heard such a Thing? who hath seen such Things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one Day? or shall a Nation be born at once? For as soon as* Zion *travailed she brought forth her Children.* This great Work was wrought by a more than ordinary Concurrence of the Spirit of God with the Word.

A *second* Instance is, that remarkable Event * in the Year 1596. The General Assembly of this Church, being conveened at *Edinburgh*, did meet by themselves the 30th of *March*, at nine of the Clock, in the little Church of *Edinburgh*, for solemn Humiliation on Account of their own Sins and the Sins of the Land; and there being assembled together about 400 Ministers, Elders, and select Christians, there was an extraordinary Down pouring of the Spirit upon them, and such deep Humiliation and Mourning amongst

* *Fulfilling of the Scripture, Part III. Page* 164.

mongſt them, as that the Place where they were met together might be called a *Bochim*; and before they parted every one of them lifted up their Hands to the Lord, and ſware to purſue perſonal and national Reformation; the like of that Day had not been ſeen in *Scotland* ſince the Reformation. This ſame Practice was, by Order of the Aſſembly, followed in all the Synods of this Church, and afterwards in Presbyteries, and in the ſeveral particular Congregations through the Land. This ſolemn Renovation of Covenant-Engagements unto the Lord, was the Fruit of a Shower of the Spirit of God that did at that Time go through the whole Land.

† A *third* remarkable Inſtance is in the Year 1625. when the Church was under a dark Cloud, and the Perſecution very hot from the Prelatick Party; about that Time there was an extraordinary Out-letting of the Spirit of God, a great Spring-Tide of the Goſpel, and that for ſome Years Continuance, in the Weſt of *Scotland*, in ſo much that the Power of Godlineſs did advance from one Place to another, and a marvellous Luſtre was to be ſeen on thoſe Parts of the Country. There is one remarkable Appearance of God under this Period, that deſerves particularly to be remembred, namely, that ſolemn Communion at the *Kirk of Shots*, *June* 20. 1630. where there was a great Down-pouring of the Spirit accompanying the Ordinances, eſpecially the *Monday*'s Sermon, that it was reckoned near five hundred had a diſcernible Change wrought on them at that Time; many of whom could date their Converſion, and others ſome remarkable Confirmation from that Day. At this

† *Fulfilling of the Scripture, Part I. Page* 416.

Time a numerous Seed were brought forth to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and a People prepared for the Coming of the Lord, in that glorious Work which he wrought *anno* 1638. which leads me to a

Fourth Inſtance; and it is that great Down-pouring of the Spirit upon all Ranks of Perſons in the ſaid Year 1638. when the whole Land did ſhake off the Yoke of Prelacy, and did return by ſolemn national Covenanting unto the Lord. Famous Mr. *Livingſtoun* tells us, in his Life written by himſelf, that he has ſeen a Thouſand lifting up their Hands to the Lord at once, and not a dry Face amongſt them: He obſerves likeways, that the whole Land went in moſt willingly to the Oath of God; ſurely there was no Force, no Compulſion here: Yea, a General Aſſembly of the Church of *Scotland* teſtifies with what Joy the Land entred into the Oath of God. In the Act of Aſſembly 1648. approving the Solemn League and Covenant, we find theſe remarkable Words, 'And having taken the ſame, (*viz.* 'the Solemn League and Covenant) as a Matter 'of ſo publick Concern doth require, into their 'graveſt Conſideration, did with all their Hearts, 'and with the Beginnings of the Feelings of that 'Joy which they did find in ſo great Meaſure upon the Renovation of the National Covenant of 'this Kirk and Kingdom, all with one Voice approve and embrace the ſame.' The Solemn League and Covenant was alſo ſworn with much Cheerfulneſs and Joy in *Scotland* and *England*, *anno* 1643. and renewed again in *Scotland*, with a ſolemn Acknowledgment of Sin and Engagement to Duty, *anno* 1648. In theſe covenanting Times there was plentiful Effuſion of the Spirit of God upon all Ranks, and many were turned unto the Lord, though, no doubt, there were not a few that were

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only brought under ſome common Influences and Impreſſions, as their after Apoſtaſy and Defection from the Covenant and the Oath of God made too evident to the World; yet ſaving Knowledge and the Things of God, and Acquaintance with the Power of Godlineſs, did increaſe, the ſealing Comforts of the Spirit of God were beſtowed upon many, ſome of whom did afterwards *reſiſt unto Blood, ſtriving againſt Sin.* I ſhall only add upon this Head, whatever Contempt ſome Men may caſt upon national Covenanting, and our ſolemn national Covenants, yet *Scotland*'s covenanting Days were amongſt her beſt Days; for the Life and Power of Religion and Godlineſs, and national Covenanting, have been ſignally owned and countenanced of the Lord. 5*thly*. I may add likeways, that very diſcernible Influences of the Spirit did accompany a preached Goſpel in the late perſecuting Times. All the Violence and Rage of wicked Perſecutors could not hinder Multitudes from reſorting unto a preached Goſpel in the Fields and in Deſerts, and the Lord accompanied his own Word with ſuch Light, Life and Power, that many were brought in to the Lord Jeſus, and others were confirmed and eſtabliſhed, and ſo were fitted and prepared to ſuffer, for the Truths of Chriſt, unto Impriſonment and Baniſhment, yea, even unto Death itſelf. The moſt Part of that Generation are now gone off the Stage; but ſome of you are yet alive, and hearing me, who felt the warm Influences of Heaven under a preached Goſpel at that Time.

3*dly*. Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved by remarkable Deliverances given them, when they have been in the greateſt Danger; the Lord has often appeared gloriouſly, when Men have appointed them to Ruin and Deſtruction, and all outward

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Appearance of Help and Relief has failed them; as in *Eſther*'s Days, when the whole Church was in Danger of Deſtruction, what a wonderful and unexpected Deliverance did the Lord give them; and truly the Church of *Scotland* has Reaſon to ſay, *Had not the Lord been on our Side, when Men roſe up againſt us, they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their Wrath was kindled againſt us.* The remarkable Deliverances the Lord has given to his Church in this Land, in the Day of our Strait and Danger, are ſo many, that I can ſcarce venture to deſcend into Particulars. I ſhall only mention two memorable Eighty-eighths, in which the Lord appeared wonderfully for his Church in theſe Lands. The firſt is, that great Appearance of God in the Year 1588. in breaking the *Spaniſh* Armada, when a Deſign was formed for ruining the Proteſtant Intereſt, both in theſe Lands and alſo abroad. Again, a Century of Years after this, when the very ſame Danger threatned the whole Proteſtant Intereſt, eſpecially in theſe Lands, how wonderfully did the Lord appear in that glorious Revolution in the Year 1688? His own Right-Hand did then work Salvation for us: And as at that Time the Lord did give us a very remarkable Deliverance, when we were upon the Brink of Ruin; ſo we have been preſerved ever ſince, by a continued Series and Train of remarkable Providences. Theſe are ſome of the ſpecial Means by which Chriſt's Seed have endured in all Ages and Generations.

To proceed now to the *fourth* Thing that I propoſed upon this Doctrine, and that is,

To lay before you ſome Things for confirming you in the Faith of this important Truth, That Chriſt's Seed ſhall endure for ever. Let us here take a View of ſome of the Attempts of Satan, the

the grand Adverſary of the Church and People of God, to root out Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed; and let us alſo too conſider how, notwithſtanding of all theſe, the Church has been ſtill preſerved. A few Obſervations to this Purpoſe may be of Uſe to ſtrengthen our Faith in this great Truth.

Before I proceed unto Particulars, you may obſerve, That in all Ages Satan has ſtill employed all his Malice, Power and Policy, againſt Chriſt's Seed, to root them out. There is an Intimation of this in the very firſt Revelation of the Goſpel, *Gen.* iii. 15. *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed.* This Enmity between the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman, is not only between the Serpent and Chriſt perſonal, but between the Serpent and his Seed, that is, Satan and the wicked and ungodly World on the one Hand, and the Seed of the Woman, that is Chriſt myſtical, Head and Members, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and all true Believers in him, on the other Hand. The War was firſt proclaimed in Paradiſe by the Lord himſelf, and it continues to this very Day without any Ceſſation of Arms, and will do ſo to the End of the World. Many Times Satan has thruſt ſore at Chriſt's Seed, but he hath never prevailed over them, and never ſhall. Sometimes, indeed, the Church has been brought very low, yea, ſo low, that, to outward Appearance, ſhe has been as it were conſumed; but ſtill ſhe has riſen more glorious out of her own Aſhes. *The Archers have thruſt ſore at her, but her Bow* hath *abode in Strength.* Her Motto has always been, *Perſecuted, but not forſaken; Caſt down, but not overcome.* The Buſh burning, and not conſumed, which *Moſes* ſaw and wondred at, was a lively Emblem of the Preſervation of Chriſt's ſpiritual

ritual Seed, in all Ages, from the Fury and Rage of Satan and his Seed. The Attempts of Satan to deſtroy the Church are compared to a Flood, which that old Serpent caſts out of his Mouth after the Woman, that he may cauſe her to be carried away by it, *Rev.* xii. 15. I ſhall name a threefold Flood that the old Serpent hath been caſting out of his Mouth againſt Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed, and ſhew you that, notwithſtanding of theſe, they have been ſtill preſerved.

Firſt, A Flood of Profanity; *2dly*, A Flood of Perſecution; *3dly*. A Flood of Error: By theſe dangerous Floods the Serpent hath ſtill endeavoured to carry away the Woman and her Seed; yet they have lived under them, and ſhall endure for ever.

Firſt, The old Serpent caſts a Flood of Profanity out of his Mouth againſt Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed: Such a Flood did in *Noah*'s Days overflow the whole Earth, and ſwelled to ſuch a Height, that God was provoked to ſweep the Inhabitants of the Earth away with a Deluge of Waters, *Gen.* vi. 5, 6, 7. And here you may notice, *1ſt*. That, under this Inundation of Wickedneſs, Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed were brought very low, ſo low that they were confined in one Family, wherein there were no more than eight Perſons, and neither were all theſe eight Perſons of that Number; for there was a curſed *Ham* amongſt them. You may obſerve, *2dly*. That as the Lord preſerved this ſmall Remnant from the wicked Contagion of that ſinful Time, ſo he provided for their Safety againſt the Deluge of Water that came upon the whole Earth, *Heb.* xi. 7. Noah, *being warned of God, prepared an Ark to the ſaving of his Houſe*. The Serpent has been caſting out this Flood of Profa-

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nity in all Ages againſt the Church; and we are warned, that, in the laſt Days eſpecially, the Church ſhall be in great Hazard and Danger from it; and therefore thoſe Days of abounding Wickedneſs and Profanity are called *perillous Times*, 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. And truly he that runs may read it, that there is an univerſal Looſeneſs in Practice, even in the reformed Churches, at this Day; the common Impreſſions of God are like to wear off the Spirits of Men, it may be ſaid all Fleſh have corrupted their Way; this is for a Lamentation: But yet Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved under this overflowing Flood formerly, and we have Ground to believe they ſhall yet be preſerved.

2*dly*. Satan caſts out a Flood of Perſecution againſt Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed; he ſtirs up his Inſtruments, the Wicked and Ungodly, to perſecute them. By Perſecution I underſtand all the Violence done by a wicked World unto the People of God, in their Names, Perſons, or Eſtates, by Reproaches, ſpoiling of Goods, Impriſonments, cruel Tortures, and the like; as alſo by killing and ſlaying of them, as not worthy to live in the World, when yet the World is not worthy of them, *Heb*. xi. 38. When the Church was in *Adam*'s Family, *Cain* did perſecute his Brother *Abel* to Death: And the Apoſtle teſtifies what Sufferings the Witneſſes for Chriſt did with Patience and Faith undergo, *Heb*. xi. 36, 37, 38. I ſhall here mention three remarkable ſuffering Periods of the Church under the Old Teſtament, to which there are three grand ſuffering Periods under the New compared. The firſt remarkable Period of the Church's Sufferings under the Old Teſtament, was that in *Egypt*, when they ſighed by reaſon of

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their heavy Bondage, and that cruel Edict was publiſhed commanding all the male Children to be caſt into the River, *Exod.* i. 22. This threatned Ruin and Diſtruction to the whole Church and People of God. A ſecond great Period of the Sufferings of the Church under the Old Teſtament, was that from the *Chaldeans* by the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, on Occaſion of which, it is probable, the 79th *Pſalm* was penned by *Jeremiah*, or ſome other Prophet, where the Deſolation of *Jeruſalem*, and the Sufferings they were brought under, are bewailed after a moſt pathetick Manner, particularly in the firſt four Verſes. A third memorable ſuffering Period of the Old Teſtament Church, was that from *Gog* and *Magog*, propheſied by *Ezekiel* in his 38th Chapter. It is thought, that by that Propheſy is intended the ſore Perſecution which the Church was brought under from *Antiochus Epiphanes*. To theſe ſuffering Periods of the Church under the Old Teſtament, there are three ſuffering Periods of the Church under the New Teſtament compared.

The firſt great ſuffering Period of the Chriſtian Church, was that Perſecution from *Rome*-heathen, called *ſpiritual Egypt*, Rev. xi. 8. This began in the Apoſtles Days, and did continue, though with various Intermiſſions, till the Beginning of the fourth Century. It is well known what Cruelties the Chriſtians ſuffered during this Period, from their heathen Perſecutors, and that many Times, throughout the *Roman* Empire, the Blood of the Chriſtians was ſhed without Mercy. The ſecond grand ſuffering Period of the New Teſtament Church, is that from *Rome*-antichriſtian, called *Babylon the Great*, Rev. xvii. 5. It is long ſince the Church's Sufferings began from this Adverſary; and the Hiſtories of preceeding Ages bear Witneſs how much

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ſhe has ſuffered from this Enemy. There is ſcarce one Nation, Province, or City, under the Juriſdiction of *Rome*-antichriſtian, where the Blood of the Witneſſes for Jeſus has not been ſhed. Since our Reformation from Popery the old antichriſtian perſecuting Spirit did exert itſelf even in this Land, in two remarkable Periods, the one before the notable Year 1638. and the other before the memorable Year 1688. and under both theſe ſuffering Times, the Teſtimony of the Witneſſes for Chriſt in our Land was ſtated for the Royal Power and Authority of the Lord Jeſus in and over his own Houſe, and that Worſhip and Government that he himſelf hath inſtituted in the ſame, which all Ranks of Perſons in the Land had, by moſt ſolemn Covenant-Engagements unto the moſt high God, bound both themſelves and Generations to come ſtedfaſtly to cleave unto. I ſhall only obſerve farther on this Head, that though the Lord has begun to appear againſt Antichriſt, yet the Storm is not wholly over. We in this Land do now enjoy a Calm, but our Brethren abroad are groaning under the Tyranny of this Enemy; and who knows, but, ere the Vial is poured out upon the Seat of the Beaſt, the Cup may paſs over again to us? The third ſuffering Period of the New Teſtament Church is that ſpoke of, *Rev.* xx. 8. But this is yet wholly in Prophecy, and therefore we can ſpeak nothing about it. I ſhall now offer a few Things concerning the Preſervation of Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed under thoſe Storms of Perſecution that have already gone over the Church, for confirming you in the Faith of this Truth, that *his Seed ſhall endure for ever.*

Firſt, Sealing Times have gone before perſecuting Times. When *Jacob* is going down with his Fa-

mily into *Egypt*, the Lord appears to him, and ſays, *Fear not to go down into* Egypt, *I will go down with thee*, Gen. xlvi. 3, 4. This Promiſe, no doubt, was ſupporting to the Faith of the Church and People of God under the ſore Trials that afterward they met with in *Egypt*. That great Effuſion of the Spirit at Pentecoſte was immediately before the firſt Perſecution raiſed againſt the infant Chriſtian Church at *Jeruſalem*, of which you read *Acts* viii. 1. The Angels of the four Winds are reſtrained from hurting *the Earth, the Sea, or the Trees, till the Servants of God are ſealed in their Foreheads*, *Rev.* vii. 1, 4. There have been ſolemn ſealing Times in *Scotland* before ſuffering Times. That remarkable Effuſion of the Spirit 1596. which we have already mentioned, went before the firſt Storm of Perſecution that did blow upon this Church after the Reformation: Alſo, before the laſt ſuffering Period, the Spirit of the Lord did accompany Goſpel-Ordinances with diſcernible Power and Succeſs, to the Converſion and Confirmation of many. Some of the Chriſtians who were Witneſſes to, and had the Experience of this ſealing Work of God, have lived to our own Times; by this Means a People were prepared for entring into the Furnace.

2*dly*. We may obſerve, that Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed have been preſerved in ſuffering Times, in regard Perſecution has been the Occaſion of the ſpreading of the Goſpel. The firſt Perſecution raiſed againſt the Church at *Jeruſalem* ſcattered abroad the Diſciples, who *went every where preaching the Word*, Acts viii. 4. The Perſecution raiſed by *Domitian* againſt the Chriſtian Church brought the Goſpel to the remote Parts of this Iſland.

3*dly*.

3*dly*. The Church of Chriſt has ſometimes been brought very low under Perſecution; but yet, in the darkeſt Times that have gone over her, the Lord never wanted his Witneſſes. Under *Achab*'s perſecuting Reign, *Elijah* complains, 1 *Kings* xix. 14. *I, even I only, am left*; yet *Ver*. 18. *I have left me ſeven thouſand in* Iſrael, *which have not bowed unto* Baal. Under the cruel Perſecutions raiſed againſt the Church from *Rome*-heathen, the Lord never wanted his Witneſſes: Likeways the Lord had ſtill his Witneſſes under all the Storms of Perſecution from *Rome*-antichriſtian; in the very darkeſt Times of Popery there were ſome found to bear Witneſs for Truth; and in this Land the Lord hath kept up Witneſſes for his Cauſe and Work, both before and ſince our Reformation from Popery, notwithſtanding all the Severities uſed by Perſecutors.

4*thly*. We may remark, that the Sufferings of the People of God have been Means bleſſed for the Converſion of ſome, and the Confirmation of others. It is an old and true Saying, The Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church; their Carriage and Behaviour at Stakes, and on Scaffolds, has ſtruck Beholders with a Conviction that the Lord was in them, and with them of a Truth; many particular Inſtances of this Nature might be given, if it were needful.

Finally, All the Church's Perſecutions have iſſued in her farther Enlargement; the more they were oppreſſed, the more they grew: This hath been verified in all Ages, and particularly in the Church of *Scotland*. It deſerves to be remembred, that, notwithſtanding of near 28 Years Perſecution, by cruel Harraſſings, Confiſcation of Goods, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, and Sufferings unto Death, which

which a great Number of all Ranks of Perſons in this Land were expoſed unto; yet, at the late glorious Revolution, there was ſuch a goodly Company in all Corners of the Land, to appear for and to own that Cauſe which had been reproached, deſpiſed and perſecuted, that the Church of *Scotland* might with Admiration ſay, *Who hath begotten me theſe, ſeeing I have loſt my Children, and am deſolate, a Captive, and removing to and fro? And who hath brought up theſe? Behold, I was left alone; theſe, where had they been?* Iſa. xlix. 21.

3*dly*. Satan caſts out of his Mouth a Flood of Error againſt Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed, and truly they have been often in very great Danger from this Flood; Chriſt warns his Diſciples concerning it, *Matth.* xxiv. 24, 25. *For there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and ſhall ſhew great Signs and Wonders, in ſo much, if it was poſſible, they ſhall deceive the very Elect. Behold, I have told you before.* Alſo his Apoſtles *Paul* and *Peter* do warn the Churches of it, 1 *Cor.* xi. 19: *For there muſt alſo be Hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt*, 1 Tim. iv. 1. *Now the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſly, that in the latter Times ſome ſhall depart from the Faith, giving heed to ſeducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils*, 2 Pet ii. 1. *There ſhall be falſe Teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable Hereſies, denying the Lord that bought them.* Alſo the Apoſtle *John*, 1 Epiſt. iv. 1. *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, becauſe many falſe Prophets are gone out into the World.* Satan did begin to caſt out this Flood very early againſt the Chriſtian Church: There were ſome, even in the Apoſtles Days, who endeavoured to obſcure or deny the Doctrine of Juſtification by the free Grace of God, through the imputed Righteouſneſs

of

of the Lord Jeſus, as is evident from the Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*. There were others alſo, who, abuſing the Doctrine of Grace, preached up a licentious Liberty, as is evident from the Epiſtle of *James*. It is remarkable that the Seed of Error has ſprung up moſt in the Day of the Church's outward Calm and Peace; when the Church was delivered from *Pagan* Perſecution, and Peace and Liberty were granted her by *Conſtantine* the Great, ſhe was immediately infeſted with a Multitude of Errors and Hereſies: She enjoyed a ſhort Calm: And what is the firſt Storm that blows upon her? Lo the *Arian* Hereſy breaks forth like an impetuous Torrent, and Corruption, both in Doctrine and Practice, did increaſe from Time to Time, till *Antichriſt* that Man of Sin was fully revealed. With reſpect to the Church of Chriſt in this Land, the State of the Controverſy ſince the Reformation has chiefly been, as we have before obſerved, about the Government and Worſhip of Chriſt's Houſe, until theſe Days of Degeneracy in which we live; wherein Reaſon is exalted above divine Revelation, the ſupreme Deity of the Son of God is impugned, and Man's natural Power and Abilities, with reſpect to Things ſpiritual, are extolled, with many other new and dangerous Doctrines, which the old Serpent is this Day caſting out of his Mouth as a Flood amongſt us.

I ſhall here offer you a few Remarks concerning this Flood, and the Preſervation of Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed under the ſame.

Firſt, The Church of Chriſt has many Times been brought very low by the riſing and ſpreading of Error; this is a Flood that carries away many, and thoſe not of the loweſt Size, but ſuch as ſeem to be tall Cedars in the Church, Men of the

the greateſt natural Abilities and Endowments; the unſanctified Gifts of learned Men have done moſt Miſchief unto the Church of Chriſt; the Church was once brought ſo low by the *Arian* Hereſy, that it was ſaid, The whole World is become *Arian*.

2*dly*. In every Period of the Church, the Lord has ſtill kept up his Witneſſes for Truth againſt prevailing Error: When the *Arian* Hereſy did moſt prevail, he raiſed up an *Athanaſius* to bear Teſtimony againſt it. Whatever Error or Hereſies do ariſe, ſome Inſtruments are fitted by the Lord for diſcovering the Dangers of them, and for contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

3*dly*. Truth hath always ſhined forth more brightly from under the Vails of Error that Men have drawn over it. Truth is like the Sun, who ſhines moſt brightly when he comes from under the darkeſt Clouds. All Attempts that have been made againſt divine Truth, have iſſued in its brighter Manifeſtation, and we have Ground to believe that the Clouds, that ſome are endeavouring at this Day to draw over the Perſon of the glorious Son of God, or any other of the precious Truths of the Goſpel, ſhall be diſſipated and ſcattered by their Luſtre and Glory. I proceed to the *fifth* general Head, to ſhew you why it is that Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed ſhall endure for ever. I anſwer,

Firſt, This was promiſed to him in the Council of Peace before the Foundations of the Earth were laid. In this glorious Tranſaction, all the Elect were given by the Father unto the Son, to be redeemed and ſaved by him; he accepted of the Gift, yea, rejoiced in the Gift and Grant that was made him of a Company of miſerable periſhing Sinners in *Adam*'s Family, to do Service to him upon

on the Earth: *For his Delights were with the Sons of Men, and his Rejoicing in the habitable Parts of the Earth, before the Mountains were ſettled, or the Hills brought forth*, Prov. viii. 25, 31. &c. The Promiſe is made to him, that, in every Age and Period of Time, he ſhall have ſome of them upon this Earth to be the Objects of this Delight and Joy: *He ſhall ſee his Seed*, Iſa. liii. 10. Yea, this Promiſe is confirmed by the Word of the Oath, *Pſalm* lxxxix. 35, 36. *Once have I ſworn by my Holineſs, I will not lie unto* David; *his Seed ſhall endure for ever.* Alſo, Verſes 3, 4. *I have ſworn unto* David *my Servant, thy Seed will I eſtabliſh for ever.* Theſe are the two immutable Things in which it is impoſſible for God to lie; therefore his ſpiritual Seed muſt endure for ever.

2*dly*. This is due unto him as the Reward of his bloody Sufferings: In his State of Humiliation he travailed to bring forth a Seed, *Iſa.* liii. 10. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, he hath put him to Grief: When thou ſhalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he ſhall ſee his Seed, and the Pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his Hand.*

3*dly*. Chriſt's Seed muſt endure for ever, that God may have Witneſſes for himſelf in the World. All Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed are his Witneſſes: The Miniſters of Chriſt are indeed in a peculiar and ſpecial Manner his Witneſſes, but they are not his only Witneſſes. This Honour have all his Saints in ſome Meaſure: Therefore, ſaith he of *Iſrael*, whom he hath redeemed and called, *Ye are my Witneſſes, ſaith the Lord*, Iſa. xliii. 10. They are Witneſſes to his glorious Being and Perfections, againſt the Atheiſm of the World, *Iſa.* xliv. 8. *Ye are even my Witneſſes. Is there a God beſides me? Yea, there is no God, I know not any.* They are

Witneſſes

Witneſſes unto the Truth and Reality of the Salvation he hath wrought, againſt the Unbelief of of the reſt of the World, *Iſa.* xliii. 11, 12, 13. *I, even I am the Lord, and beſide me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have ſaved: Therefore ye are my Witneſſes, ſaith the Lord.* They are Witneſſes unto the Glory and Excellency of this Salvation, againſt the Contempt the unbelieving World caſts upon it. To them that believe not, Chriſt is *a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence, but unto ſuch as believe he is precious,* 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, 9. They are Witneſſes for the Holineſs of God, and the Purity and Equity of his Law, againſt the Unholineſs, Wickedneſs and Profanity of the World. Therefore Chriſt ſaith to to his Diſciples, *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven,* Matth. v. 6. There was never an Age wherein Chriſt wanted his Witneſſes. When a Deluge of Profanity had overſpread the whole World, *Noah,* a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, bears Witneſs for God againſt them. Satan never broached an Error under the moſt ſubtle Diſguiſe, but the Lord did alſo raiſe up ſome to bear Witneſs againſt it: For this End Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed muſt endure for ever, that there may be ſtanding and living Witneſſes for the Holineſs of God, and for his Truths upon the Earth.

4*thly.* Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed ſhall endure for ever, becauſe the Spirit is given without Meaſure unto their Head the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *the Spirit of the Lord doth reſt upon him,* Iſa. xi. 2. He is anointed with the Spirit above his Fellows, and it is for their Sakes that he is anointed, *John* xvii. 19. *For their Sake I ſanctify myſelf. He received Gifts for Men, even for ſuch as did rebel,* Pſalm lxviii. 18.

18. The Spirit and all his Grace was given unto him, that he might beget a Seed unto himſelf, and cheriſh and nouriſh them till they ſhould be perfected in Glory. The Spirit of the Lord doth reſt upon the Head, and is communicated from him unto all his Members, according to that Promiſe, *Iſa.* lix. 21. *My Words that are in thy Mouth, and my Spirit which I have put within thee, ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed's Seed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* As the Lord Jeſus lives in Heaven, ſo he muſt live on Earth by his Spirit in his Members, therefore his Seed ſhall endure for ever.

5thly. Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed endure for ever, becauſe he hath obtained Victory over the old Serpent; the Lamb has overcome him already. *Michael*, the Angel of the Covenant, hath prevailed over the Dragon and his Angels. In the firſt Proclamation of War that was made againſt the Serpent and his Seed, the Victory was inſured to the Seed of the Woman, *Gen.* iii. 15. *He ſhall bruiſe thy Head.* This Declaration of War, and the Promiſe of Victory made to the Seed of the Woman, was no doubt a ſurpriſing Diſappointment to the malicious Deſigns and Expectations of the old Serpent: This Promiſe had its Accompliſhment when our Lord Jeſus ſuffered unto Death; then he triumphed over Principalities and Powers, and made a Shew of them openly upon his Croſs; Kings of great Armies were foiled, even ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places; the Head of *Leviathan* was broke in Pieces by the glorious Head of the Church; and by reaſon of his Victory and Conqueſt over the Powers of Darkneſs, the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt his Church. This ſame Promiſe is

alſo accompliſhed every Day, in the Preſervation of the Children of God in the Midſt of their Enemies; and it will have its final Accompliſhment, when *Satan* is for ever bruiſed under the Feet of Chriſt's myſtical Head and Members, *Rom.* xvi. 20. *The God of Peace ſhall ſhortly bruiſe Satan under your Feet.* The exalted Head of the Church ſhall reign *till all his Enemies are made his Footſtool.*

6thly. Chriſt's Seed ſhall endure for ever, that the Lord may be ſeen and glorified in this great Work of their Preſervation. In our Text it is ſaid, *His Seed will I make to endure for ever.* I WILL MAKE, whatever Oppoſition may be made to this Work of mine, whatever Adverſaries they may have. O! what of God is to be ſeen in their Preſervation, conſidering the Power and Multitude of their Enemies? The old Serpent, with all his Power, Malice and Cunning, is againſt them; the World alſo hateth them; they are like *the Lily among Thorns*, Song ii. 2. If you inquire what of God is to be ſeen in their Preſervation, I anſwer,

Firſt, The Sovereignty of God, even his abſolute Dominion over the Works of his own Hands; *He doth in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth*, whatſoever ſeemeth good in his Sight; and *he reproveth Kings for* the Sake of his People, *Pſalm* cv. 15. yea, for their Sakes he will take their Crowns from off their Heads, and ſpoil them of all their Glory: He will overturn Empires and Kingdoms for them. The *Babyloniſh* Empire was overturned for their Cruelty againſt the Church and People of God, and the *Perſian* Empire is raiſed up, that *Cyrus* might be the Inſtrument of the Church's Deliverance, *Iſa.* xlv. 1, 4. *Thus ſaith the Lord to his Anointed, to* Cyrus, *whoſe*

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Right-Hand I have holden, to ſubdue Nations before him. For Jacob *my Servant's Sake, and* Iſrael *mine Elect, I have even called thee by thy Name: I have named thee, though thou haſt not known me.*

2*dly*. The Power of God is manifeſted in this great Work; he diſplays the Glory of his Power in ſetting Limits to the Fury and Rage of Devils and Men againſt the Church, *Pſalm* xlviii. 11. His Power is ſeen in preſerving his People in the Furnace, and delivering them out of it; alſo in reviving them when they are like the dead and dry Bones ſcattered about the Grave's Mouth.

3*dly*. The Wiſdom of God is alſo to be ſeen in the Preſervation of Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed. Infinite Wiſdom has baffled all thoſe Projects that have been ſet on Foot, by Satan and his Inſtruments, for the Ruin of the Church, and turned them about for her farther Growth and Enlargement. The Wiſdom of God hath brought Light out of the darkeſt Clouds, and Order out of the greateſt Confuſion. When the Witneſſes for Chriſt are ſlain, and the Inhabitants of the Earth are rejoicing, and making merry over their Deſtruction, lo *the Spirit of Life from God enters into them, and they aſcend up into Heaven in a Cloud, and their Enemies behold them*, Rev. xi. 12.

Finally, His Faithfulneſs is glorified in their Preſervation; his Faithfulneſs in accompliſhing his Word of Promiſe, made firſt unto their Head the Lord Jeſus: *The Lord hath ſworn by his Holineſs, he will not lie unto David:* Therefore the lxxxix Pſalm is uſhered in with a Song of the Faithfulneſs of God, in the firſt Verſe, *With my Mouth will I make known thy Faithfulneſs to all Generations.* The Church and People of God have had Reaſon in all Ages

to

to ſay with the Prophet, *Great is thy Faithfulneſs*, Lam. iii. 23.

I proceed now to draw ſome Inferences from this Subject.

Infer. 1*ſt.* If it be ſo, that Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed ſhall endure for ever, hence we may ſee, that all Attempts whatſoever to root them out ſhall prove ineffectual; *The Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt* the Church, *Matth.* xvi. 18. Yea, Jeruſalem *ſhall prove a burdenſom Stone for all People: All that burden themſelves with it ſhall be cut in Pieces, though all People of the World be gathered together againſt it*, Zech. xii. 3. All the Attempts of the Enemies of the Church and People of God, againſt them, ſhall iſſue in their own Ruin and Deſtruction.

Secondly, If it be ſo, then let us turn aſide with *Moſes*, and behold with Wonder *this great Sight, a Buſh burning and not conſumed.* The Church has ever been in the Midſt of Danger, yet behold ſhe lives. That Day never dawned, wherein it could be ſaid, that Chriſt wanted ſome to do Service to him; and that Day ſhall never dawn wherein it can be ſaid that his Seed fails from the Earth. This is a wonderful Work of God; and, if we ſeriouſly look into it, it cannot but fill us with Wonder and Admiration. I ſhall offer a few Things to evidence that this is a wonderful Work of God.

1*ſt.* There has been a continued War, without a Ceſſation of Arms, theſe five thouſand Years, and more, againſt all Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed, yet they remain. A few Years War frequently depopulates and wears out the moſt flouriſhing Countries; but here is a War that has been carried on by powerful Adverſaries, by *ſpiritual Wickedneſſes in high Places, by Principalities and Powers, the Rulers of*

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the Darkneſs of this World, even by the Dragon, that old Serpent, who hath managed this War with all his Power, Policy and Skill; yet notwithſtanding Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed do endure to this very Day, and *ſhall endure for ever.*

2*dly.* Conſider alſo the Enmity that is in the World againſt Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed; *They are not of the World*, but choſen out of the World, therefore *the World hateth them*, John xv. 19. The World are not only Enemies to them, but Enmity againſt them; they are Enmity againſt that Doctrine they believe and receive, againſt him whoſe Children they are, and againſt his bleſſed Image which they bear: This Enmity is not for a Time, or for one Age only, but it deſcends from Father to Son, from one Race to another. It is as natural for Men to hate Chriſt and his Seed, as it is for them to eat and ſleep. It is the Obſerve of one, That the human Race moves as naturally to deſtroy Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed, as it doth to preſerve its own Kind; yet, notwithſtanding of this Enmity, they endure for ever.

3*dly.* Conſider alſo what diſmal Times have gone over the Church, what dreadful Tempeſts have beat upon her; the Floods of Profanity, Perſecution and Error have many Times ſwelled to ſuch a Height, as they have threatned to ſwallow her up, yet ſhe remains; this is a wonderful Work of God.

Thirdly, If it be ſo, that Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed ſhall endure for ever, hence we may ſee a Bow in the darkeſt Clouds that may hang over the Church; whatever threatning Diſpenſations ſhe may be brought under, yet Chriſt's Seed ſhall endure for ever: With this the Lord's Remnant may and ought to encourage themſelves in dark and trying Times.

I ſhall

I ſhall upon this Head mention a few dark Providences we are under at this Day, which threaten Danger to the Church of Chriſt, notwithſtanding of which the Lord's People, who are exerciſed under a Sight and Senſe of theſe Things, may draw Encouragement from this Promiſe in our Text, *His Seed will I make to endure for ever.*

In the *firſt* Place, Corruption in Principle prevails throughout all the reformed Churches. Ah! what Degeneracy is there from Reformation-Principles? The Doctrine is corrupted, the Wormwood and Gall of Error is mingled with the Waters of the Sanctuary; the Superſtition in Worſhip is made light of by too many; the Hedge of Government, that Chriſt hath ſet about his Houſe, is broke down by others. We need go no farther than this Church and Land wherein we live; all the Parts of our covenanted Reformation are at this Day aſſaulted; the Foundations of Doctrine are undermined. Some are not afraid to call in queſtion the ſupreme Deity and neceſſary Exiſtence of the bleſſed God our Saviour. Superſtition in Worſhip abounds through the Land. The Foundations of Government are overturned by others, who, under fair Shews and Pretences, are reviving the old exploded Sectarian Schemes: All theſe Things are againſt Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed; yet this Promiſe in our Text is a Bow in the Cloud, *His Seed will I make to endure for ever.*

2dly. There is an univerſal Degeneracy at this Time from the Power and Life of Religion. May it not be ſaid of all the reformed Churches, that the Charge given againſt the Church of *Epheſus* may be too juſtly applied to them, *Rev.* ii. 5. *Nevertheleſs I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt Love.* A Form and Shadow is come

come in instead of the Life, Power and Substance of Religion and Godliness; and amongst us our primitive Love and Zeal are much decayed, *and the Things that remain are ready to die*; yet, Have we not Ground to believe, that because the Head of the Church lives, she shall live also? And altho' the Church should be like the dry Bones scattered about the Grave's Mouth, yet she shall be revived through the Death and Resurrection of her living and exalted Head, *Isa.* xxvi. 19. *Thy dead Men shall live, together with my dead Body shall they arise: Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the Dust.*

3*dly*. Corruption in Practice prevails exceedingly in this degenerate Day. Many have no Profession of Religion at all; many that have a Profession of Religion are a Reproach unto their Profession. How unlike unto the Christian Name are many who are called *Christians?* Sins of all Kinds abound both against the first and second Table of the Law. A Conversation like the Gospel is a rare Thing. Many profess to look out for Heaven, and hope to be there, yet they are Strangers to a Conversation in Heaven; the most Part *seek themselves*, their own Things, and *few the Things of Christ*. May we not say with the Apostle, that the Walk of many discovers that *they are the Enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose End is Destruction, whose God is their Belly, and whose Glory in is their Shame, who mind earthly Things*. This Degeneracy in Practice is very threatning unto the Churches of Christ; but yet he who has preserved a People unto himself, under the overflowing Floods of Profanity and Wickedness, will still preserve a Remnant. There is one Thing here I would have you to beware of, when you see the Walk of Professors unlike their Profession, blame not the holy Religion that they

they profeſs; or, when you ſee the Conduct and Behaviour of any amongſt us, unlike that pure Worſhip, and beautiful Order and Government that Chriſt has inſtituted in his Houſe, blame not the Ordinances of Chriſt; lay the Blame where it ſhould be laid, even upon the Corruptions of Men.

4*thly*. The ſpiritual Glory is very much departed from all the Churches of Chriſt at this Day; the Purity of the Ordinances, and the ſpecial Preſence of the Lord in the Ordinances of his own Inſtitution and Appointment, is the Glory of the Church; *Zion*'s God is her Glory, *Iſa*. lx. 19. And when the Lord withdraws his gracious Preſence from his own Ordinances, then it may be ſaid that the ſpiritual Glory is removed. And may we not ſay, that there is a great Withdrawing of the divine Preſence from his own Ordinances amongſt his Church and People? Is it not ſo with a Witneſs amongſt us? Where is that convincing, converting, or confirming Power that ſometimes has accompanied the Ordinances of the Goſpel? May we not ſee *Ichabod* written upon our Aſſemblies, and written upon all our Solemnities? Is not the Hope of *Iſrael* like a Stranger, like a way-faring Man in all the Churches? But will he altogether leave his People, and caſt off his Inheritance? No, he will not, *Pſalm* xciv. 14. Look out therefore for his Coming, and live in the Faith and Expectation of his Return to his Churches; *He will ariſe, and have Mercy upon* Zion; *the Time to favour her, yea, the ſet Time* will *come*, Pſalm cii. 13.

5*thly*. Lukewarmneſs and Indifferency under all theſe Evils is very epidemick at this Day. *Laodicea*'s Diſeaſe prevails, and it is both a dreadful Plague and Sin, *Rev*. iii. 16. *Thou art lukewarm, neither*

neither cold nor hot. O how unconcerned are many though the Doctrine of the Lord's Houſe be corrupted? How indifferent are others though the Government of his Houſe be trampled upon? It is the Sin of not a few, that they are like *Ephraim*, *a Cake unturned*, cold upwards towards God and the Things of God, and warm towards the Earth and their own Things. But though we ſhould not be concerned for the Truths of Chriſt, yet he will not want his Witneſſes; he will have a Seed to do Service to him, and to bear Teſtimony unto his controverted and deſpiſed Truths.

4thly. If it be ſo, that Chriſt's Seed ſhall endure for ever, O then contribute your Endeavours towards the preſerving of a ſpiritual Seed to the Lord Jeſus. The Promiſe doth not exclude the Uſe of Means on your Part, but ought to quicken and encourage you to uſe all proper Means incumbent upon you towards this great End. And, in the *firſt* Place, let me exhort every one of you to be fervent in Prayer, that the Lord Chriſt may have a Seed to do Service to him: This is a Mean that every Chriſtian ought to uſe; this is a Mean, as we have told you, that the Church and People of God have uſed with good Succeſs when they have been brought low. The low State of the reformed Churches at this Time, and all the Providences of God towards them, call aloud for this Exerciſe; pray then importunately that the Lord may revive his own Work in the Midſt of the Year, that he may return to his Churches, that his Work and Power may appear amongſt them, and that his Glory may yet be ſeen in them; pray that he may vindicate his own Truths from the Reproach and Contempt that the Adverſaries are throwing upon them; pray that Peace and Truth

may be within *Jeruſalem*'s Walls, and then may we hope that Proſperity ſhall be within her Palaces. *2dly*, Let me exhort you all, and every one in your ſeveral Stations, to exert yourſelves for advancing the Kingdom of real Religion and Godlineſs: Let ſuch as are Magiſtrates employ their Power and Authority for this End; and let ſuch as are in a more private Station walk ſo as they may commend Chriſt and his Truths unto the Conſciences of others; this may be a Mean of Eſtabliſhment unto the Weak, and alſo of Conviction and Converſion to ſuch as are Strangers unto Chriſt. *Finally*, Be careful to tranſmit the Truths of Chriſt in their Purity to the riſing Generation: We in this Church and Land have pure Principles of Doctrine delivered to us in our excellent Confeſſion of Faith, larger and ſhorter Catechiſms, all drawn from that pure Fountain of Truth, the Holy Scriptures. We have pure Ordinances of Worſhip, and a Government eſtabliſhed in Chriſt's Houſe according the Pattern ſhewn on the Mount: Let the riſing Generation be informed and inſtructed in theſe Principles; yea, let it be told to Poſterity, that theſe three Lands, and *Scotland* many Times, have lifted up their Hands and ſworn to the Lord, to preſerve and maintain the pure Doctrine, Worſhip, Government and Diſcipline of Chriſt's Houſe; and that no Perſon or Perſons on Earth can diſſolve the Obligation of the Oath of God. Truth is a ſacred Truſt committed to us to be kept for the Sake of Generations to come; it is the moſt valuable Treaſure we can leave behind us unto our Children; it is the indiſpenſible Duty of one Generation to deliver this precious Truſt ſafe and uncorrupted to another; yea, to ſhew unto them the Praiſes of the Lord, his Strength,

and his wonderful Works that he hath done, that the Generations to come may know them, and that the Children yet to be born may ariſe and declare them to their Children, that they may ſet their Hope in God, and not forget the Works of the Lord, but keep his Commandments, *Pſalm* lxxviii. 6, 7. Honeſt and faithful Endeavours of this Kind are an excellent Mean to preſerve a ſpiritual Seed unto the Lord Jeſus. Now, may the City of the Lord flouriſh, and may her Citizens abound in Number like the Graſs upon the Earth: Let his Name endure for ever, and his Memorial to all Generations; and let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory. *Amen* and *Amen*.

FINIS.